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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Carson Working for Funding to Combat Methamphetamine
Joins With Bipartisan Coalition to Secure Funding for the National
Guard Counter-Drug Activities***

Washington, D.C. --

Second District Congressman Brad Carson (D-OK) continued his battle against Methamphetamine today, as he joined with members of the bi-partisan Congressional Methamphetamine Caucus in urging increased funding for the National Guard Counter-Drug program. Members of the caucus authored a letter to Congressmen Jerry Lewis (R-CA) and John Murtha (D-PA), the Chairman and Ranking Member on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, urging them to agree with the Senate Defense Appropriations bill provision that increases funding for the National Guard Counter-Drug Support program by \$35 million.

The National Guard Counter-Drug Program assigns guardsmen to support federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to fight illegal drug manufacturing, sale, use, and importation. Assigned personnel utilize military resources and logistical support to provide intelligence analysis, communications support, ground and aerial reconnaissance, anti-drug education programs in schools, and investigative case support.

"The National Guard Counter-Drug Program is critical in providing support to our law enforcement officers and in combating not only Methamphetamine, but all illegal drugs," Congressman Carson said. "At a time when our local and federal law enforcement agencies are in a dire need for additional officers, the National Guard has provided an essential service and needed personnel."

Since 1997, the National Guard has provided support to law enforcement in combating illegal drugs. In 2001, the National Guard had 3,260 on-duty personnel for Counter-Drug activities. Facing budget cuts in 2002, the Guard reduced personnel to 2,650 guardsmen. Unless the Senate provision is adopted, personnel will be reduced to 2,265 on-duty reservists.

"Methamphetamine use nationwide has increased 600 percent over the past seven years. In Oklahoma, we have seen a 6,000% increase in Methamphetamine labs

confiscated by law enforcement since 1995. Oklahoma's law enforcement community is overwhelmed by this surge. In no means is it an understatement to say Methamphetamine is destroying families and communities across our state. This drug is a plague, and we must be aggressive in combating meth producers and dealers.

"I fully support the National Guard and resources provided to law enforcement not only in Oklahoma, but across this nation. The DEA, FBI, Border Patrol, state police, county sheriffs' departments, and local police departments all utilize the National Guard Counter-Drug program in fighting illegal drugs. I am hopeful Chairman Lewis and Ranking Member Murtha will agree with my colleagues and I in supporting the increased funding in the Senate Appropriations bill."

Congressman Brad Carson recognizes Methamphetamine is one of the most pressing issues confronting Oklahoma law enforcement and communities. Methamphetamine poses a significant danger not only to the drug user, but also to the community as a whole. For every one pound of Methamphetamine cooked, five pounds of toxic waste is produced. In over 80% of meth labs, law enforcement finds young children in the presence of deadly chemicals.

As part of his commitment in combating Methamphetamine, Congressman Carson is the author of H.R. 5243, the Rural Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act. This legislation, if enacted, would provide increased grant funding to rural law enforcement agencies to hire, equip, and train officers in working meth labs.

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